



**File Code:** 1950; 2600  
**Date:** April 29, 2019

Dear Interested Party:

This project announcement letter serves to initiate scoping, “an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed” (40 CFR 1501.7). Scoping is required for all Forest Service proposed actions, including those that would appear to be categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS) (36 CFR 220.4(e)(1)). I request your input on the following proposed actions regarding the management of the Red Slough Water Control Structure Installation Project.

The Forest Service proposes to add two new water control structures (WCSs) within Red Slough Wildlife Management Area (RSWMA). This project will improve management ability for water level manipulation within Units 30W and 31. The two WCSs will be installed at appropriate locations to facilitate drainage of these two units. One water control structure (WCS) will be used as the main structure to drain Unit 30W. The second WCS will allow water to drain from Unit 31. Both structures will consist of screw gates with 12 inch steel pipes and 6’x5’ welded wire mesh panels as inlet trash guards. The inlet trash guards will be constructed on a concrete pad. A catwalk to each WCS screw valve will also be constructed. Total length of the outlet pipe for Unit 30W will be 80 feet and for Unit 31 will be 62 feet.

Presently, Units 30E and 30W function as one unit as they are connected to each other. To draw down the water level in Unit 30W, it needs to flow through the Unit 30E WCS. This is not an ideal situation for waterfowl management. These two units need to be divided into stand-alone units so that each can be drawn down and/or filled independently. This will provide for increased management quality and control.

Currently, Unit 31 has a WCS but it was not installed in the correct location and thus does not function appropriately. The unit cannot be drained by the existing WCS. The proposed WCS in the northeast corner of Unit 31 will allow for a more appropriate and complete draining of the unit.

The purpose of this project is to improve management ability for water level manipulation. To provide quality habitat for wintering waterfowl, marsh birds, wading birds, and shorebirds, managers must have the ability to pull water off each unit in such a way to provide appropriate water levels, promote quality habitat, and growth of important plant species. Timing of water level manipulations are key to providing optimum forage and habitat.

Unless scoping identifies extraordinary circumstances, this project is within a category of actions that is excluded from documentation in an EA or an EIS; only a decision will be documented. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Robert Bastarache, District Wildlife Biologist, by phone at (580) 494-6402 ext. 107, by email at [rbastarache@fs.fed.us](mailto:rbastarache@fs.fed.us), or address



written comments to the District Ranger at the address listed above. Your comments would be most helpful if received by May 30, 2019.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bennie H. South". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bennie" being the most prominent.

BENNIE SOUTH  
Acting District Ranger

Enclosure